

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners, I have more bad news in my morning paper about media in my country. A local TV station owned by a giant media corporation (FOX affiliate) is pulling an ad by a Democratic candidate. This is outrageous. Further, Sinclair Communications is adding to their record of shame (pulling programming by ABC that included reading the names of Iraqi War dead...a move applauded by such hawks as Sen John McCain). Sinclair plans to air a scurrilous piece of anti-Kerry trash produced by another operative of right wing media...The Washington Times....ON THE NIGHT BEFORE THE ELECTION. It's a bald-faced attempt to sway the election.

As a citizen who wants to be informed about the political and electoral issues that affect my life, I am greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming, and plethora of right wing trash in media.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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